

Piedras Blancas
California Coastal National Monument Initiative
Post Office Box 4724
Paso Robles, California 93446
October 6, 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair, Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski,

I am writing in support of Senator Boxer's bill, *S. 1971, the California Coastal National Monument Expansion Act* that is scheduled for a hearing before your Subcommittee on Public Lands on Thursday, October 8, 2015.

The Piedras Blancas Monument Initiative is a joint campaign by two not-for-profit, 501(c)3, organizations—the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association, (PBLSA) and Friends of the Elephant Seal, (FES).

PBLSA works to support the conservation, restoration and education efforts of the Bureau of Land Management, (BLM) in the 20 acre historic light station designated as the Piedras Blancas Outstanding Natural Area by the *2008 Consolidated Natural Resources Act* signed by President Bush.

FES is a Cooperating Association with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, (CDPR); it works to preserve a colony of 23,000 northern elephant seals that birth, nurse, breed, molt and rest on six miles of beaches in the expanded Piedras Blancas Outstanding Natural Area.

Under a provision in the *2008 Consolidated Natural Resources Act*, the 424 acre Hearst San Simeon State Park was included in the Piedras Blancas Outstanding Natural Area; all 440 acres are currently managed under two Cooperative Agreements between BLM and CDPR—one signed in 2011, the other in 2013.

We are pleased that *S. 1971* includes provisions to continue joint management of federal and state land to ensure the highest level of protection for all of Piedras Blancas' natural and cultural treasures.

Passage of *S. 1971* will foster a healthy blend of joint responsibility, conservation, education, community engagement and commerce. Current annual attendance levels of 750,000 are expected to increase significantly over the next several years. From a practical point of view, the increasing numbers of visitors must be met with new trails, vista points, signage and expanded educational programs that increase public access and reflect the highest standards of ecological responsibility. The steadily increasing numbers of eco-tourists will stimulate additional growth in San Luis Obispo County's tourist industry that now generates more than \$1 Billion annually.

Our campaign has attracted a coalition of governmental, commercial, service, fraternal and environmental entities that support the goals of *S. 1971*. Enclosed is a list of organizations that have expressed their enthusiasm with formal resolutions of support. This list will continue to grow. To this date, we have encountered no opposition to expanding the California Coastal National Monument by the inclusion of the Piedras Blancas Outstanding Natural Area.

We ask for your leadership and support to pass *S. 1971, the California Coastal National Monument Expansion Act*.

Sincerely,

Donovan Marley, Director
Piedras Blancas Monument Initiative

Cc: Senator Cantwell
enclosure

**Advocates for the Piedras Blancas California
Coastal National Monument Initiative**

Sponsored by

**Friends of the Elephant Seal
Piedras Blancas Light Station Association**

Governmental

Cambria Community Services District
League of Women Voters, SLO County
Northern Chumash Tribal Council
San Simeon Community Services District

Chambers of Commerce

Arroyo Grande/Grover Beach
Atascadero
Big Sur
Cambria
Morro Bay
Nipomo
Los Osos
Paso Robles
Pismo Beach
San Miguel
San Simeon

Environmental

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, CO
Friends of Fiscalini Ranch, CA
Friends of Joshua Tree Forest, AZ
Friends of Organ Mountains, NM
Friends of Red Rock Ca
Friends of San Pedro River, AZ
Grand Staircase Escalante, UT
Ocean Outfall Group, CA
Pacific Coast Peregrine Watch, CA
Sierra Club, Santa Lucia Chapter, CA
Wilderness Society

Tourism Alliances

Atascadero Tourism BID
Avila Beach Tourism Board
Oceano/Nipomo Tourism Board
Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance
San Luis Obispo County BID
San Simeon Tourism Alliance
Travel Paso Robles Alliance
Visit Los Osos/Baywood
Visit San Luis Obispo County

Service and Fraternal

American Legion Post 432, Cambria
Area Agency on Aging
Cambria Lions Club
Cambria Odd Fellows
Cayucos Lions Club
Morro Bay Lions Club
Los Osos Kiwanis
Rotary Club of Los Osos
Rotary Club of Morro Bay
South Bay Community Center
Sunrise Rotary Club, Cambria